NewsRelease

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NASA Langley Scientist Earns National Award

A scientist from NASA Langley Research Center will receive a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE) at a White House ceremony on July 12.

The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) selected James Crawford, a research scientist in NASA Langley's Atmospheric Sciences Competency and first-ever Langley recipient for the national award. Presented annually to a select few, the PECASE is the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. Government on outstanding researchers who are beginning their independent research careers.

In addition to the honor of being selected, the PECASE awards Crawford with five years of funding totaling almost half a million dollars to pursue his research in the Global Tropospheric Experiment (GTE). GTE, managed by NASA Langley, is NASA's contribution to the United States' Global Tropospheric Chemistry Program that is part of an international effort to study the lower atmosphere.

"The success of GTE depends on the cooperation of over 30 separate investigative teams involved in both collecting and interpreting atmospheric chemical data," said Crawford. "In that sense, this award represents an endorsement of GTE's larger scientific goals. The GTE data set continues to deserve increased attention, and I plan to use the research money to attract new investigators to explore the data for potentially unmined information."

After a decade of experience with GTE, Crawford became the deputy mission scientist for the Transport and Chemical Evolution over the Pacific (TRACE-P) experiment. TRACE-P, the most recent GTE aircraft-based field campaign, occurred during the spring of 2001 off the Pacific East Asian coast.

Crawford received the award based on his TRACE-P research proposal that investigates the atmospheric chemistry of ozone and associated gases by incorporating airborne observations of these gases into computer simulations of their interactions. Understanding this chemistry is crucial to understanding how pollution gases are transformed and ultimately removed from the atmosphere.

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Crawford earned his undergraduate degree in mathematics from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. After spending five years on active duty in the U.S. Army, he enrolled in the Earth and Atmospheric Science program at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. At Georgia Tech, he first began working with GTE and ultimately earned a doctorate in atmospheric chemistry. He joined the project full time as a NASA Langley employee in 1997.

The NSTC annually selects PECASE awardees based upon the recommendations of 10 federal agencies. The PECASE awards are intended to recognize some of the finest scientists and engineers who, while early in their research careers, show exceptional potential for leadership at the frontiers of scientific knowledge.

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